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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EFIN](#) [KRCM](#) [KHLs](#) [AEMR](#) [UV](#)

SUBJECT: BURKINA FASO: 2008 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: 08 STATE 120019

1. As requested in reftel, Embassy provides the following narrative for the 2008 Country Report on Terrorism.

2. Burkina Faso continued to lack the resources necessary to protect its borders adequately and to monitor the movement of potential terrorists. However, in December, Burkina Faso was accepted as a member of the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and is now eligible for various programs aimed at improving the nation's capacity to combat terrorism. Burkina Faso would benefit from programs and training aimed at improving border security and information collection; building security forces' capacity to counter terrorism; and programs to counter extremist ideologies.

3. There is no formal method for tracking the movement into and out of the country at border checkpoints, or at either of the country's two commercial airports. Burkina Faso was not known to be a safe haven for any terrorist groups, but had the potential of becoming one due to its close proximity to several countries in which terrorist groups currently operate and because its borders are porous -- especially in the sparsely populated north.

4. Despite its lack of resources, Burkina Faso was serious about the war on terrorism. The Government cooperated with the U.S. in its efforts to combat terrorism, where possible, and participated in training, seminars, and exercises, such as the regional Flintlock exercise held in Spain and Mali and familiarization events offered by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), including a force protection familiarization conducted for the armed forces and Gendarmes, and a military intelligence course for the armed forces. In 2007, Burkina Faso submitted a request to the USG to train its existing, approximately 150-person, antiterrorism unit under the RSP. While the specific request was not fulfilled, SOCEUR and AFRICOM initiated several other projects and programs that will assist Burkina Faso. For example, in September, SOCEUR initiated three projects in Burkina Faso to increase mutual understanding, improve tolerance, and combat extremist ideology by supporting non-violent conflict resolution and shared values.

5. Outside of U.S. cooperation, the government participated in regional efforts at combating terrorism with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, and other international organizations -- for example, participating in an ECOWAS Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat to West Africa held in October in Cape Verde.

6. While the government did not support international terrorism or terrorists, there were some individuals and private groups in Burkina Faso with ties to extremist groups in Gulf States. There was also a growing Lebanese Shia population in Burkina and a small Hezbollah presence as well. It should be noted that the Burkinabe are generally a tolerant people and that there is little religious or ethnic conflict in the country.

7. Embassy Ouagadougou designates POL/MIL Officer Breanna Green as

the point of contact (POC) for the CRT. The ECON/COM Officer, Pamela Hamblett is the CRT alternate POC. Breanna Green may be contacted by email: GreenB2@state.gov, office phone: (226)5030-6723 ext.4087, or fax: (226) 5035-6054. Pamela Hamblett may be contacted by email: HamblettPA@state.gov, office phone: (226)-5030-6723 ext. 4079, or fax: (226) 5035-6054.

JACKSON